

**Recreation Committee Meeting
Wednesday, April 1, 2009 6:30 PM**

ITEM #1

30 acres of land that abuts Nelson Street and Mayflower Street

ITEM #2

ORDERED THAT the Veterans Service Agent update the City Council on the Vietnam Veterans Park and monument and will it be ready for Memorial Day.

ITEM #3

Minutes



**CHICOPEE CITY COUNCIL
RECREATION COMMITTEE**

ACCEPTED 3-9-10

MEMBERS

Dino Brunetti, Chairman
John Vieau, Vice-Chairman
Donald Demers
Chuck Swider
Timothy McLellan

**MINUTES
April 1, 2009**

The following are the minutes of a public hearing held Wednesday, April 1, 2009 at 6:30 p.m. in the City Council Chambers, Fourth Floor, City Hall Annex, 274 Front Street, 4th floor, Chicopee, MA 01013

Present: Brunetti, Vieau, Demers, Swider, McLellan

Also Present: Councilor Brooks, Councilor Zygarowski, Councilor Croteau, Councilor Krampits, Councilor Moreau, Councilor Tillotson, State Representative Joe Wagner, Dan Garvey, Stan Walzak, Scott Szczebak, Kate Brown, Dave Chapdelaine, Ken Golash

Meeting called to order at 6:30 PM

Item #1:

ORDERED THAT the Veterans Service Agent update the City Council on the Vietnam Veterans Park and monument and will it be ready for Memorial Day

Councilor Moreau stated that this can not go another year without doing anything. In the meantime should at least plant flowers and paint.

Councilor Tillotson stated he doesn't think it will be done by Memorial Day but agrees with Councilor Moreau that something should be done in the meantime and if by chance it were to be done my Memorial Day; it gives the City two months and would have to start now. He also stated last year was an embarrassment considering people from all over Western Massachusetts visit.

Stan Walzak stated they have already jump stated the project. Job Corp is willing to paint and the Parks & Rec. Dept. will supply supplies needed for the job. Although they still need more information such as what shrubs will be used, for the most part everything is in order. Also asked if the Parks Commission would have to approve the artillery piece as well as the Council

Councilor Brunetti stated if it was to happen he would either invite the Commission or hold a joint meeting regardless.

Motion to get memorial presentable for this Memorial Day (5/25/09) Service and still work on Army tank or howitzer for the future

Motion to endorse the gift from the Department of Army and to forward it to the Parks Commission for the approval

Motion passed. Committee vote: 5-0 favorable

Item #2:

RESOLUTION

BE IT RESOLVED by the Chicopee City Council that we support the Land Acquisition for Natural Diversity Program Grant application from the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs; and

WHEREAS, This program is intended to provide funding to assist municipal conservation commissions in acquiring land for the natural resources and passive outdoor recreation purposes; and

WHEREAS, the Chicopee Conservation Commission has applied for this grant for approximately 30 acres of land that abuts Nelson Street and Mayflower Street in the City of Chicopee; and

WHEREAS, this land would be used to conservation purposes; and

NOW THEREFORE, WE, THE CHICOPEE CITY COUNCIL encourage our state legislators to support the Local Acquisition for Natural Diversity Program Grant application submitted by the City of Chicopee.

We have set our hand and seal on this resolution March, 17, 2009.

Councilor Swider stated he has been involved for the last 6 years and it has become controversial with neighborhoods when it went from industrial to residential. 5-16 homes could be built there but never precise because of wet lands etc. He stated he spoke with Joe Wagner and asked if it was appropriate to do and his response was it was a good idea. He also spoke with Michael Knapik and his office has no problem so he came to the Council and that's where it stands

Councilor Brunetti stated it came to Committee because things in the Mayors order in the appraisal were missing/questionable

Councilor Swider stated this is for State Representatives to understand the grant on file and to support it. That's it.

Joe Wagner stated from a state perspective:

March 13th he received a call from Mayor Bissonnette stating and application went out on the 12th. Wagner told him to send a copy of it and he would review it.

This past Monday the 30th he received a call from Councilor Swider stating he wants to sign a resolution and Wagner answered he had no problem but will "Trust and Verify" it. As Wagner went through it he noticed the appraisal had been missing information. Although he had no problem with the appraisal he did however have a few questions such as the value was \$450,000 based on assumptions. Words in the appraisal that were used were "Extraordinary assumptions" and "It is assumed that..."

Joe Wagner stated he spoke with the State about this and they liked it until he told them to look over appraisal and then they too saw problems. He stated he is not comfortable that he has enough information to stand strongly behind this. He suggests amending appraisal and having a further review with a wet-lands expert.

Councilor Brunetti asked if the only way to get this is to get a grant

Joe Wagner answered yes

Councilor Tillotson stated he won't vote unless he knows what he is voting for. He stated he feels the public is not being told everything and 30% is only the "tip of the ice-burg" in paying money for this project. He firmly urges the committee not to approve it tonight and to wait and let the residents sit on it and consume the information they absorbed tonight and wait for answers from the state.

Councilor Brooks stated his home abuts the Elks Lodge and it is nothing but wet-lands. He stated he may not be an expert but the land is unable to be built on. He stated he will not support this unless there is a second appraisal.

Councilor Moreau stated in September of 1988 a map was developed showing Nelson Street and neighboring streets as well. It clearly states where the appraisal is talking about as "Unsuitable for development" On maps used now, the same statement is used.

Councilor Krampits stated he has concerns as well of the appraisal and parks rather than homes. He stated parks tend to attract trash, crime etc. also a lot starts to come up when parks are around. He also stated he has major development in his ward where 1 family homes are going up. He doesn't want to see a trend that people will start wanting grant to protect wildlife all over the place.

Melvin Brown of 56 Roy Street asked how can you file an application with no facts?!!

Mark McAuliffe of 359 Granby Road stated he agrees with Brooks and Tillotson; can't go forward without facts.

Tom Trznadel of 57 Acker Circle asked if with the grant the city will have to build a park

Councilor Swider stated benches and trails but not swings, slides etc.

Tom Trznadel stated someone must maintain that then and asked why this wasn't brought up at the city meeting? He stated he didn't find out about this until Monday evening that it will be a park. He also stated he would like it to be kept AS IS, no parks, no tractors etc. and his neighbors agree that we do not need another park to maintain.

Councilor Swider stated 16 other communities also applied for grants and we may not get ours which the parcel will then go back to Demers. He stated tonight may only be hypothetical and if another city gets grant we are back to square 1.

Councilor Vieau stated he does not live in the ward but he does know people that do and he understands the impact it has on residents. He stated what he sees is a city paying \$200,000 (30%) for something residents don't want. He also stated he doesn't believe it is in the cities best interest to go forward with grant and purchase land; totally against it and is publicly stating that.

Motion made by Councilor Vieau to table.

Motion passed. Committee Vote: 5-0 favorable

Item #3:

Minutes- April 23, 2008

Motion made by Councilor Demers to approve

Motion passed. Committee Vote: 5-0 favorable

Meeting adjourned at 8:28 PM.